



The City of Chicago – Christy Moore – Notes (1)



- **Activity types:** Discussion; gap fill; Pronunciation focus on “ch” / ʃ/, /tʃ/ and /k/; Internet search
- **Level:** Intermediate/Upper-Intermediate (Song only: Pre-Intermediate)
- **Language:** summarising and reporting historical events and geographical details; comparing; making a tourist leaflet
- **Grammar:** Past Simple (regular and irregular verbs);
- **Note:** Christy Moore, one of the best-known Irish folk singers, has made a major contribution to the development of Irish music since the 1970s. He has both re-arranged old songs and written new songs about Irish and world current events. For further details visit www.christymoore.com
The song *The City of Chicago*, written by his brother Barry (better known as Luka Bloom) and released on the 1984 album *Ride On*, is about the mid-nineteenth century Irish Great Hunger or Famine, caused by repeated failure of the potato crop. Famine and emigration are recurring themes on traditional Irish songs.

- **Discussion:** To introduce the song and create interest in the topic you can ask some of the following questions:

Do you know the meaning of the words *hunger* and *famine*? Do you know any countries in the world that lack food nowadays?

What do you know about the Irish Great Hunger in 1845-49? Why do you think the year 1847 was called “Black 1847”? Was Ireland an independent country at that time?

Do you know where the city of Chicago and County Donegal are exactly? (Students can use a world map if available)

- Explain they are going to listen to a song about the Great Famine in Ireland.
- Write the following verbs on the board:

be
begin
bring

die
drive
journey

know
ride
spread

Ask students to write the **past simple** forms of each of these verbs. Point out the verbs can be regular or irregular. For less common irregular verbs you can allow students to use a dictionary or they can try to guess.

Key: (note: the numbers refer to the next activity)

1. was/were

2. began

3. drove

4. journeyed

5. knew

6. died

7. spread

8. rode

9. brought

- Students **listen for the verbs above** and number them in the order they hear them (if they appear more than once, refer to the first time). Play the song. (See **Key** above)
- Give each student a copy of the worksheet and ask them to **fill in the gaps** with the missing verbs according to their answers to the previous activity and context. They may have to change the form (positive/negative: **was/wasn't**).
- Play the song again. Students check in pairs. Correct in open class, then sing together.
- **Pronunciation focus:** Point out that in the word *Chicago* “ch” is pronounced / ʃ/. “Ch” is usually pronounced /tʃ/ in English (*chair*, *much*). The pronunciation / ʃ/ occurs in some words derived from French, such as *champagne* and *moustache*, while the pronunciation /k/ occurs mainly in words derived from Greek, such as *chaos* and *Christ*.



FURTHER ACTIVITIES

- **Note:** You can choose one or more of the following activities or you can divide the class into different groups according to their interests and skills and each group can develop a theme.
- A) HISTORY:** In the 19th century, according to the 1801 Act of Union, Ireland was part of the United Kingdom. The 1841 census showed a population of over 8 million, which was reduced by 20 to 25% between 1845 and 1852, due to starvation and mass emigration to the UK, USA, Canada and Australia. The Famine was a watershed in the history of Ireland. At the Chicago Gaelic Park there is a Famine Memorial. In the 1990s the Irish economy began to grow rapidly, becoming known as the Celtic Tiger. In the last few years Ireland experienced immigration from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe, although with the current economic crisis many of these immigrants have returned home.
(mainly based on wikipedia)
- **Web search:** Students can search for further information about **the Great Hunger** and/or **Irish mass emigration** in the 1840s, in particular towards the USA and Chicago, **summarise and report their findings**. They can also use other resources such as history books and documentaries if available. They should consider the following points:
 - The factors that led to the famine
 - The British government response
 - The Irish diaspora
 - The Irish in Chicago; the Famine Memorial at Chicago Gaelic Park
 - **Comparing:** Students can compare Ireland to their own country. Has it ever experienced famine or mass emigration? If so, when and why? What is the trend today? Is it mainly an emigrant or an immigrant country?
- B) GEOGRAPHY:** County Donegal, situated in the north-west of the Republic of Ireland, is one of the most beautiful Irish counties with its 650 kilometres of rugged coastline, sheltered bays and Blue Flag beaches.
- **Web search:** Students can search more information about Donegal on the web. Suggested sites: www.wikipedia.org, www.donegal.ie, www.dun-na-ngall.com
 - They can **report their findings** on a poster where they can also draw a map of Donegal.
 - Students can **make a tourist leaflet** about Donegal including the following points:
 - General information about Donegal (geography and history)
 - How to get there from their own country
 - Accommodation
 - Places to visit
 - Activities/Entertainment
- C) SPORT/MEDIA:** Donegal offers many sport activities, such as golf, cycling, walking, trekking, riding, angling and surfing. In particular, its coastline is very popular among surfers. The 2008 surf documentary *Waveriders* was set in Donegal and shows spectacular surfing destinations. You can read more at www.inisfilms.com/behindthescenes/?p=12
- D) MUSIC:** This worksheet could be the first step to introducing students to traditional Irish music. There is an interesting article, with worksheet, entitled **Ireland: A Culture Reflected In Its Music** on the Tune Into Ireland page of www.tuneintoenglish.com.



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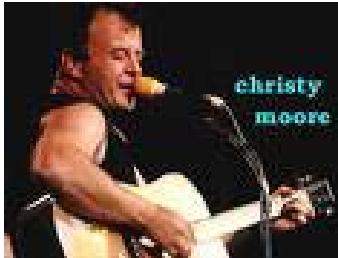


Complete the song using the Past Simple of the following verbs:

be _____
begin _____
bring _____

die _____
drive _____
journey _____

know _____
ride _____
spread _____



**In the city of Chicago
As the evening shadows fall
There are people dreaming
Of the hills of Donegal**

1847 _____ the year it all _____,
Deadly pains of hunger
_____ a million from the land.
They _____ not for glory,
Their motive _____ greed,
A voyage of survival
Across the stormy sea



**To the city of Chicago
As the evening shadows fall
There are people dreaming
Of the hills of Donegal**

Some of them _____ fortune,
And some of them _____ fame,
More of them _____ hardship
_____ upon the plain.
They _____ throughout the nation,
They _____ the railroad cars,
_____ their songs and music
To ease their lonely hearts



**To the city of Chicago
As the evening shadows fall
There are people dreaming
Of the hills of Donegal**



The City of Chicago – Christy Moore – Complete



**In the city of Chicago
As the evening shadows fall
There are people dreaming
Of the hills of Donegal**

1847 was the year it all began,
Deadly pains of hunger
Drove a million from the land.
They journeyed not for glory,
Their motive wasn't greed,
A voyage of survival
Across the stormy sea.

**To the city of Chicago
As the evening shadows fall
There are people dreaming
Of the hills of Donegal**

Some of them knew fortune,
And some of them knew fame,
More of them knew hardship
Died upon the plain.
They spread throughout the nation,
They rode the railroad cars,
Brought their songs and music
To ease their lonely hearts.

**To the city of Chicago
As the evening shadows fall
There are people dreaming
Of the hills of Donegal**